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I saw them in 1859 in the heart of the buffalo range, and every year since. They were more plentiful along the southern border of the state and in the Indian territory, where shelter was better. On account of their many enemies—wildcats sneaking upon them both night and day, coyotes and skunks destroying their nests, hawks watching for them, and the terrific fires which sometimes swept through the thickets in which they lived, blizzards burying them deep in the crusted snow, they could not exist except in sheltered thickets. They were very wild, always flying when approached. I do not remember of seeing one on the ground, and I noticed that they were considerably smaller than the quails of Iowa.

In the same localities were considerable numbers of prairie-hens and sharp-tailed grouse.

Bob-whites rapidly increased with the settlement of the country. Whether they are descended from the original stock of the country I cannot say; but, from the fact that our quails are considerably smaller than the Iowa bird, I think most of them are.

FELIS CONCOLOR.

BY J. R. MEAD, WICHITA.

Read December 30, 1898.

Felis concolor, locally known as mountain lion, panther, cougar, puma, and perhaps other names, was occasionally found in central Kansas in its first settlement; was common along the southern line of the state, yet more common in the Indian territory, now known as Oklahoma. Its habitat was along the timbered streams and the prairies and hills adjacent.

In the fall of 1859 the writer noticed skeletons of buffalo calves, some recently killed and partly eaten, in a heavily timbered bend of the Solomon river a few miles above its mouth. Later, the Sac and Fox Indians on their annual fall hunt camped in that bend, and with the aid of their dogs killed an immense panther. I did not measure the skin, but it was the largest of many that the writer obtained from the Indians in subsequent years. In 1865 the writer saw one on the White Water in Butler county, close to Mean's ranch, where Towanda now stands. It came out of the tall grass, close to where my children were playing in the road, and leisurely bounded along to the bluff to the east.

In the winter of 1864 the writer rode almost onto a very large male lion lying at length upon the prairie some three miles south of the junction of the Medicine Lodge and Salt Fork rivers, near the great salt plain. His color harmonized so completely with the dead, brown buffalo-grass that he was not observed until I was almost onto him. He was not disposed to move from his position, and not having my rifle with me I rode around him at a distance of fifty feet and talked to him, but could not induce him to move, except his eyes and head, which followed my every movement. A bunch of wild horses near by in a ravine may have been his quest. I rode away, leaving him to his meditations.

In March, 1868, near a spring surrounded by trees, south of the Canadian river, I saw the skeletons of seven antlered deer within a radius of 200 feet. They had been food for panthers, I suppose.

Deer were their principal food, springing upon them from a tree over a trail; or, more frequently, still-hunting them—sneaking upon them in the grass as a cat does a mouse. We once found a deer freshly killed and covered with leaves, its neck bitten through and skin torn by sharp claws—cached for a future meal.

These notes were suggested by my friend, Professor Dyche, asking if I had ever heard a panther "scream," stating that in his large experience as a hunter he had never met a man who had, and regarded the "scream" as a myth. I can answer most emphatically that I have.

In January, 1868, during extreme cold and heavy snow, I was camped, in the winter, near the mouth of Turkey creek, on the Cimarron river. About ten o'clock one night two panthers came close to the camp, less than 100 yards, and, lifting up their voices, let loose the most unearthly, blood-curdling screams it was ever my good fortune to hear. Lobo, the big buffalo wolf, has a deep, profound, musical howl, which can be heard for miles over the silent, frozen plains; and their music has lulled me to sleep as I lay wrapped in my blankets in the snow; but the unearthly scream of a panther close at hand will almost freeze the blood in one's veins, and for an instant paralyze almost any form of man or beast. My horses and mules tied to the wagon usually paid no attention to wild animals; but on this occasion they trembled like a leaf. Some Indian women and children were sitting around their camp-fires. They screamed and ran into their lodges. The few Indian men seized their weapons. I distinctly remember being astonished myself.

The next morning it was snowing. I took my trusty friend and companion, my rifle, and waded through the snow to a dense body of post-oak timber, half a mile distant. Underneath the interlocking branches of the timber was a thicket of brush and greenbriers. I soon found the fresh tracks of two large panthers and followed their tracks through and under the brush and vines and between the tree trunks for an hour, always close to them, sometimes within two rods. I could not see them, as the falling snow covered the brush and vines, completely shutting out the sight of anything more than a rod distant. They could easily have sprung upon me from either side or behind. I failed to get sight of them.

In all my experience, I never knew any wild animal to attack a person unless wounded and crowded upon. Panthers frequently killed and ate Indians' horses and the Indians hunted and killed them with the aid of dogs.

A panther's scream heard in the wilderness on a still night is an experience never to be forgotten. The memory of it will stay with one to the end.

Mr. William Matthews, of Wichita, my former partner on the plains and the original "Buffalo Bill," who spent more than twenty years on the plains and mountains as hunter, trapper, guide, scout, and trader, from the head waters of the Missouri river to the Gulf, commencing in 1848, tells me that he has killed twenty or thirty of the animals; that he has often heard them scream, and describes it as similar to my experience. He says that they have other tones of voice to suit the occasion, as other cats have, and that a mountain lion is a distinct variety of *Felis concolor*—has a short body, and heavy, stout legs, while a panther has a long body and shorter, lighter limbs. He says that both varieties were more numerous in the vicinity of the Wichita mountains than in any other locality. He never knew one to attack a person.